

LIFELONG LEARNING AS A STRATEGIC DIRECTION IN EDUCATIONAL POLICY OF MODERN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

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Abstract. New strategy of “lifelong learning”, applied to the higher professional education provides the correspondence of professional education system to the demand of actively developing international education and labour market. Therefore, the prerogative of modern higher educational institutions is to generate readiness for lifelong learning in both students and teachers that could be considered as an integral new formation providing individual attitude to continuous educational self-learning research’s activity and perfection of students’ vocational competences to be competitive and successful on the labour market.

Keywords: modernization, continuous education, development strategy of high professional education “lifelong learning”, integration of education and science, key competences, interactive technologies and various forms of active learning

In the context of Russian professional education, modernization establishment and development of an up-to-date model of a higher educational institution as an innovation center are taking place. That center will have the power to adapt to changes on the labour market and at the same time to adjust educational programs and scientific researches to the aims of specific manufacturing trends that in its turn require new approaches to its structure and management. Integration of education and science, manufacturing, and international labour market focus is its priority mission. It determines the necessity to seek for the most appropriate mechanisms to extend access to learning through enhancement of knowledge dissemination mechanisms using united networks of innovative technologies for all categories of citizens to be able to study and self-perfect throughout life and eager to master new knowledge and competences to improve their social and professional status.

To meet ongoing changes a new strategy of education – for “lifelong learning” – has been developed and applied to higher professional education. Lifelong learning is understood in European countries as “all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills, and competences within a personal,

civic, social and/or employment-related perspective” (Nigmatullina, 2012). Its aim is to empower people of all ages with equal and open access to opportunities of high level learning and different types of educational process all over Europe. It provides the correspondence of professional education system to the demand of actively developing international education and labour market. Therefore, education mission, which, according to major provisions of this strategy is transferring to a higher level and providing every person with opportunities to follow their course of life, that supposes a combination of specific professional knowledge and skills to meet the demands of individual development, civil qualities and moral standards formation is changing (Nigmatullina, 2012).

The comparative analysis of lifelong learning theory and practice showed that establishing and developing of the lifelong learning concept in national and foreign pedagogics formed on the basis of accumulated historic theoretical and practical experience as “an example of dialectical transition to a totally new phase of education development” is first of all determined by historic-pedagogical prerequisites introduced by philosophical and pedagogical models. The model of learning throughout life deserves special attention because its key ideas have become the source of origin and development of a new educational strategy at the same time as the process of continuing education/learning makes its basis. It is segmented and includes: advanced training of professional staff, system of “apprenticeship”, professional training of unemployed citizens, education and training of adult population – andragogics. A general integrated system of qualifications consolidates these segments. At present this system is mostly aimed at competences which are regarded as an integrated person’s aptitude for productive professional activity and social interaction. It is within the framework of throughout life education where key strategies of lifelong learning are being formed and tested. Some of them are different forms and methods of getting new basic skills, new models of financing and professional education quality improvement, accreditation of previously obtained education and recognition of informal learning, and also the usage of open distance learning, innovative methods of learning etc.

As for further prerequisites, they are socio-economical ones stipulated by the aims and tasks of common European educational space. They include society and economy based on knowledge, the Bologna process, world tendencies of internalization, convergence and globalization of higher education. The third group encompasses professionally-stipulated prerequisites that include European structure and qualification frames, a system of key competences motivating the necessity for lifelong learning for every member of united Europe.

Considering the general strategy of education development and the reflection of growing awareness of knowledge significance and gradual increase of their role in citizens’ education for successful development of the society and its population a lifelong learning concept had been worked out which was officially adopted by UNESCO in 1970. In 1972 UNESCO issued E. Faure’s report “Learning to be” in

which was upheld the idea of lifelong learning for both the individual and the society as a whole. The report asserted the importance of education for an individual full-fledged development, and the idea to reconsider the role of education in society was stated. At its beginning the lifelong learning strategy realization was built on two fundamental grounds: extension of adults' post-compulsory additional education and formation of an appropriate system to encompass an individual's whole life, all its aspects within the frames of educational institutions. This variant regarded education only as a systematically organized institutional essence that did not take into consideration educational opportunities outside educational institutions (except traditional dual system) (Nigmatullina, 2012).

According to the modern point of view lifelong learning is seen as a complicated process including educational activity within the frames of formal, non-formal, and informal learning facilitating knowledge, skills and vocational competences acquisition for personal, social and professional development. Its innovative essence consists of taking education beyond the frames of educational institutions, providing opportunities for obtaining education with the help of formal, non-formal and informal learning, interaction of knowledge received at the initial stage of education and knowledge acquired at later stages, and also theoretical and practical knowledge. Besides, it presupposes the absence of a teacher (instructor) thus actualizing the role of self-education, cognitive or educational needs, professional competences and their lifelong updating.

These provisions distinguish the Concept of lifelong learning from the Concept of continuing education thus putting it at a higher level.

The undertaken analysis of higher professional education modernization process in some European countries and Russia showed that lifelong learning as an up-to-date strategy of higher professional education development is realized along several fundamental guidelines that include key competences formation provided by diversified educational programs; integration of general and professional subjects within the frames of educational programs; flexibility of education due to the transition from general education route to professional one and vice versa, connection between different professional routes provided by module learning and "mixed" courses; increase of learning at the workplace, development of education based on competences; elaboration of mechanisms for gaining further vocational education throughout life; adults' access extension to lifelong learning programs.

Thus, considering the strategy in the present-day context of education development, a conclusion can be made that lifelong learning is a purposeful educational activity within formal, non-formal, and informal learning which facilitate acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences aimed at individual, social and professional development.

It is necessary to state that in Russia, as well as in leading European countries, the paradigm of learning is a strategic guideline of educational policy. Several

years ago it was claimed that there was a gap between the contents of political declarations and real application of theoretical material in Russian vocational school practical activity, then at present this gap has been narrowed due to diversification of curriculums, forms and methods of teaching that allow active population to study throughout life (Nigmatullina , Boltakova, 2012).

However, the development of the lifelong learning concept is impossible without people's learning motivation. Hence, the prerogative of modern higher educational institutions is to generate both in students and teachers readiness for lifelong learning that we consider as an integral new formation providing individual attitude to continuous educational self-learning research activity and perfection of vocational competences to be competitive and successful on the labour market. Our complex research of theoretical aspects of readiness for lifelong learning has made it possible to conclude that this issue will be successfully solved in the case of learners' educational, self-learning and research activity on the basis of social order and demands of international educational market and interactive technologies used in the process of learning.

Though this paper does not pretend to be a final and full research work, we will nevertheless try to explore the way lifelong learning is realized in the policy and educational activity of the Institute of Pedagogy and Learning of Kazan (Privolzhsky) Federal University that performs professional teaching of future competent specialists within the framework of the Russian multilevel system.

Major guidelines and tasks of the lifelong learning concept are accomplished by chief divisions of K(P)FU: Institute of Continuing Learning, Center of State and Municipal Employees' Re-training and Advanced Training, Privolzhski Centre of Educators' Refresher Training and Vocational Re-training, Faculty of Refresher Training, Faculty of Pre-higher Educational Training, and Faculty of Additional Training.

The more detailed analysis of the system of training for teacher-logopedists and special psychologists at the Department of Special Psychology and Correctional Pedagogics of the Institute of Pedagogy and Education at Kazan (Privolzhsky) federal university is the subject of our consideration. Kazan (Privolzhsky) federal University as a higher educational institution at a federal level carries out its activity in compliance with the approved by the Russian Government Program of Development 2010-2019. The aim of the programme is to implement priority directions of the new educational lifelong learning strategy.

In general, the professional teacher-logopedists' education reform in Russia is designed to extend the set of skills mastered by future teacher-logopedists due to more profound learning courses and key competences formation within the framework of professional performance. This set of skills includes: educational programs integration for the purpose of skills in demand in different spheres of professional activity ("transferred skills"); social skills necessary for life and work

independent from chosen educational route (general or vocational education) formation; integration of general and professional subjects included into curriculums (due to introduction of basic language, maths, science courses); provision of teacher-logopedists' education flexibility at the expense of transition from a general education route to a professional one and vice versa and link between different professional routes due to module learning and "mixed" courses; enhancement of interaction with educational correctional institutions and increase of the number of teacher-logopedists gaining in-service higher education, and also development of education based on competences; elaboration of mechanisms to provide graduates with the opportunity for gaining vocational education throughout life; decentralization of education system management so that local needs and quality are provided at all levels; adults access to programs of vocational education and learning throughout life that give them opportunity (the so called "second chance") to obtain the profession of a teacher-logopedist or receive the position of a teacher-logopedist or increase chances for the unemployed to get a job or to master new modules within the lifelong learning framework (Artemyeva, 2009).

The positive feature of modern speech correction education at IPE KFU is teacher-logopedists' training in related spheres of activity. Senior students get acquainted with basics of other speech correction specialties while they do the course "Basics of children with developmental disturbance teaching and training" which surely expands their knowledge in the sphere of special pedagogy. Elective courses, optional courses such as "Early infantile autism", "Teaching and training children with behavioral disruption", "Teaching and training children with infantile cerebral palsy", "Teaching and training children with complicated structure of disruption" and some other courses increase future teacher-logopedists' professional competences. Theoretical knowledge is backed up by school practice at specialized boarding schools for children with infantile cerebral palsy (VI type) and deaf and dumb and hard-of-hearing (II type) children, and at schools for children with heavy speech disturbance (VII type). School practice reports are prepared in written form according to a standard form. In them, there information must be included on what a student has learnt, who helped them, how much time was spent etc. Besides, this report is supposed to have some presentations created by students where they expose theoretical and applied material using photographs, fragments of lessons etc.

Teacher-logopedists and school practice supervisors actively use educational technologies such as teaching with the help of discovery that suppose practical situations creation when students detect and solve certain problems, and role-play that allows to replace a real situation by its artificial analogy when students act in an imagined situation. These technologies motivate participants to study studying and help avoiding the monotony of long educational programs.

If students get interested in work with children having hearing difficulty, they can attend re-training courses at Privolzhsky interregional center of re-training and

advanced vocational training attached to KFU. Since September 1, 2012 there have been opened new directions of training: Defectology (surdopedagogy), Defectology (oligophrenopedagogy), Defectology (logopedia).

Our students aim at proactive attitude to life, knowledge acquisition and mastering their profession. In compliance with “The Program of Development 2010-2019” of Kazan federal university, the department of special psychology and correctional pedagogy acquired the equipment and set up a training defectological laboratory “Lekoteque”. Theoretical grounding and model development of Lekoteque was carried out as a variable-based form of special pre-school education within the context of inclusive space for children with specific educational demand. Starting from the first year, students attend lectures and practical lessons conducted by the department staff on the basis of Lekoteque (Akhmetzyanova, (2013). Besides, each member of the staff is a supervisor of a scientific society attached to this training defectological laboratory. There students work at certain scientific problems and gather material for their term papers and scientific articles. The Department of Special Psychology and Correctional Pedagogy arranges an annual All-Russian scientific and practical students’ and postgraduates’ conference under the topic “Current issues of special psychology and correctional pedagogy: research and practice”. The materials of the conference are published afterwards. Project work, case study, brainstorming, work with algorithms, simulation and non-simulation games are used by teachers within elective courses. To stimulate and motivate students’ work we use such methods as crediting, diploma and merit certificate awarding that allow students to have their professional portfolio by the end of studies. Test-control, colloquium, module method, credit methods are all used to realize methods of control and self-control. The choice of these methods facilitates high level of students’ involvement into the process of study, development of their activity during different types of training performance, coincidence of teachers’ and students’ cognitive interests, collective enforcement, feedback availability, educational motivation (both personal and socially important), opportunity to design their future profession content, students’ emotional sensitivity.

Students’ teaching at the university is not limited only by lectures and practical classes. The department is efficiently cooperating with “Institute BOS”, St. Petersburg, “St. Petersburg Research Institute of Ear, Throat, Nose and Speech”. In 2012 the latter conducted a training seminar for students and staff members “Cochlear implantation as a current way to rehabilitate children and adults with ear difficulty”. All the participants were issued certificates. In the process of studying students get interested in everything new and advanced.

Lifelong learning suggests various forms of learning beginning with distant learning, on-line learning, traditional throughout life education, correspondence courses and finishing with self-learning. Learning motivation varies from individual to individual: somebody is eager to upgrade qualification, to gain new

skills, somebody would like to change their life completely, i.e. to devote their lives to a new occupation after retirement. All these forms are being introduced and perfected by the staff of our department. Since 2009 there have been developed and introduced E-educational resources which help students get easier ways for their lesson preparation and the staff to gain an opportunity to keep students' learning process under control. The application of ICT and its individualization brings closer the learning process and the user. The present informational space implies the skill to select information, use it, transform it into knowledge, and arrange self-learning. Therefore, learners stop being simple "information receivers". At the same time the role of a teacher changes in such a way as to provide conditions for learning and helping to learn instead of only "transmit" knowledge.

Teaching materials worked out at the department of special psychology and correctional pedagogy contain student' learning tasks of three levels: basic, advanced and creative. Students can independently select the one that is achievable for them at this very stage of learning.

The Department of Special Psychology and Correctional Pedagogy keeps up the idea of learning throughout life, i.e. of everybody, everywhere, everything and at all age. In 2010, an educational program was elaborated and implemented for the enrollment of students for the course 050700.62 Special (defectology) education, training logopedia as a second higher education. In 2012 the enrollment for a parallel training according to logopedia profile was carried out. Students who successfully finished the first course are enrolled for 050700.62 course, special (defectological) education, profile of training is logopedia, correspondence form of study. This gives students an opportunity to receive two higher educations within four years.

The experience of our department to record and register graduates involved in research work, having published works, and those maintained thesis is of some use and importance. To a certain extent it may demonstrate the interconnection between theory and learners' independent work which means readiness for self-education, creates a basis for vocational education throughout life, gives an opportunity to upgrade vocational skills, and in case of necessity to re-train, to become a conscious and active citizen and creator.

It was stated by researchers that learners' knowledge mastering and their training to apply it in the process of self-education and research activity are two sides of a single process, since in the process of knowledge application a fuller and deeper exposure of its content takes place.

Interconnection of educational and independent activity including self-educational and research activity is especially important at the transition from mastered system of notions to its practical application. And it is more important at the transition from abstraction to reality. According to the point of view we are interested in the process of vocational education streams along two directions. The first one is characterized by learners' acquaintance with the theory of throughout life education. This process

is aimed at studying subjects. The second direction is a type of learning, “from hand to hand”, it reflects teachers’ desire to provide learners with practical skills and competences of self-educational and research activity. The teaching staff of the department arrange a lot of activities to improve the level of vocational training for logopedists, defectologists, psychologists and pedagogues working with children of special educational demands: All-Russian competition “Vector of success-2012 – best teaching guides and correctional lessons of logopedia and special psychology”, scientific seminars, international scientific and practical conferences.

Thus, one of the innovative guidelines of throughout life teaching strategy realization is the integration of educational, self-educational and research activity of future teacher-logopedists not only in the process of education in a higher educational institution but also in the process of on-the-job training. This guideline provides interconnection of theory of education with independent students’ work which develops readiness for self-education, creates the basis for throughout learning, and gives the opportunity to steadily upgrade qualification, and if it is necessary to re-train to be a conscious and active citizen, competent specialist, competitive on the international labour market.

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